

Milk Producers Ask Retention Of Handler Pool

Philadelphia, Dairy farmers from central Pennsylvania, the Eastern Shore of Maryland, and Southern New Jersey went on the witness stand at the U.S. Department of Agriculture hearing to ask retention of a handler pool type of pricing in the Philadelphia-Wilmington-South Jersey area with prices to farmers depending on individual dealers' utilization, rather than a marketwide pool.

J. Lin. Huber of St. Thomas in Franklin county, Pennsylvania, said he was speaking both as an individual producer who discusses marketing problems with his neighbors and as president of Inter-State Milk Producers' Cooperative, which has about 4,000 members in Del., Md., N. J., and Pa., shipping to the proposed area.

"The handler pool is the only legitimate economic protection that we as producers have to keep unnecessary milk from landing in the Philadelphia market," Huber said.

F. Bennett Carter of Centerville, Md., vice president of the Cooperative, said, "I firmly believe that elimination of the handler pool from this area would not only work a terrific hardship on many present Philadelphia-Wilmington-South Jersey farmers; it would also work a hardship on the whole area and the Order 2 (New York-North Jersey) producers would not be helped."

"We strongly favor a handler-pool order to combine the present Philadelphia and Wilmington orders, and to include the areas of southern New Jersey not now covered by a federal order," said C. H. Fields of the New Jersey Farm Bureau. He urged that such an order be written and put into operation with the least possible delay.

David L. Middleton, manager of United Milk Producers Cooperative Association of New Jersey, testified that there is "dire need" for federal regulation in South Jersey and that it would make a natural marketing area with Philadelphia and Wilmington.

The hearing, which opened March 5 before U.S.D.A. Hearing Master, will continue until all interested parties have put

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their testimony on record. This record then will be reviewed in Washington, and a decision handed down.

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Livestock slaughter by Pennsylvania commercial slaughter plants totaled 139.3 million pounds, liveweight, during February 1963, 5 percent above February 1962, according to the Pennsylvania Crop Reporting Service.

The 10 percent increase in pork production, and the 2 percent increase in beef production more than offset the decline in the production of lamb and mutton (18 percent). Veal production remained about the same as in February

1962. Although the average liveweight of hogs was below February 1962 this was offset by a 11 percent increase in the number of head. The increase in beef production resulted from both a slight increase in the number of cattle slaughtered and an increase in average liveweight.

Compared with January 1963 the total slaughter was down 13 percent, which is near the normal seasonal decline for February.

Change in production of January and February combined compared with the same period last year were beef the same, veal down 1 percent,

pork up 8 percent, and lamb and mutton down 26 percent. Commercial production of red meat during February in the 48 conterminous States was 2,218 million pounds, 5 percent more than a year earlier, but 13 percent less than a month earlier.

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